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WITH

SYMPHONIES AND ACCOMPANIMENTS FOR THE PIANOFORTE.

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ARRAH IN 1857

LONDON
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TWO MONTHS IN ARRAH

IN

1857

BY

JOHN JAMES HALLS

B.A. (CAMBRIDGE): FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND: ASSISTANT-SURGEON IN HER MAJESTY'S BENGAL ARMY: AND LATE ASSISTANT-SURGEON AT THE CIVIL STATION OF ARRAH

LONDON

LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN, AND ROBERTS

1860

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HENRY MORSE STEPHENS

ac

The following account of the Siege of Arrah was originally written for the information of the Author's friends; but as that gallant defence exercised so material an influence in arresting the progress of the great Indian Mutiny, its history has been thought not unworthy of a more public record.

London, January, 1860.

511603

TWO MONTHS IN ARRAH IN 1857.

THERE are perhaps comparatively few in England who have any very distinct ideas upon life in India; fewer who know what is life in India at a civil station; and fewer still who are conscious of the existence of a modest little civil station, an episode in the history of which we are now about to relate.

Life in India,—without entering into luxurious disquisition on tiffin, curry, and "brandy pawnee,"—we shall content ourselves with describing as a life of excessive laziness, alternating with the most wearying exertion—the former injurious to the mind, the latter too often to

the body; the transition from the one state to the other being often sudden, and dependent on unforeseen circumstances. The intense heat and relaxing nature of the climate give but too specious an excuse for sloth to the indolent; while to the impetuous and energetic man, unless he be gifted with a fair amount of prudence, they bring—and sometimes with fearful rapidity—disease and death.

Life in India at a civil station is, or rather was, an existence of easy leisure, with intervals of employment of the dullest and most uninteresting nature. The amount of labour daily varied according to the character of the individual, his capacity for business, his physical temperament, and a variety of other circumstances. The work was always routine; the recreations were routine likewise. A Government servant daily got up, had his chota Hazree, his walk, his bath, his breakfast, went to his

"cutcherry," and perhaps to the billiard room; took his wife to the one drive of the station, ate his dinner, and after a cup of coffee retired to bed—if insensible to heat and mosquitoes, possibly to sleep. The same course had to be traversed on the morrow, the same the next day, the same for weeks, months, and years; a man was like a wheel,—perpetually going through a succession of turns; getting over the ground indeed towards promotion and pension, but slowly and imperceptibly wearing away his life. The wheel will sometimes break down on the road; the civilian also was carried off by dysentery or cholera at his post, as the damp and mildewed monuments in the European burial-grounds abundantly testify.

Arrah, the little civil station above mentioned, is situated in the district of Shahabad, near the junction of the rivers Ganges and Soane, at about ten miles distant from the

former and eight from the latter, which intersects the road to Dinapore and Patna, Arrah being distant from Dinapore about twenty-four miles. To approach Arrah by the Dinapore road, after passing the Keimnirgger bridge, which spans a stream of some size, and traversing about a mile and a half of very bad road, the traveller proceeds for a considerable distance between thick groves of mango and other trees*, when a new and somewhat imposing mosque meets his eye on the right, and beyond the native town commences. The old houses, with their quaintly carved balconies and balustrades, many of them in a very tottering condition, give a picturesque appearance to the scene; but the open drains, the mud walls, the dirt and wretched appearance of some of the inhabitants, give ample evidence of

* Note 1.

a darker side to the picture; indeed it would be difficult to find more miserable habitations than the huts of the poorer community in this and other native towns, or fitter nursebeds of contagion and disease.

After extending for about a mile, the main street makes an abrupt turn to the left, and becomes widened into a broad straight road or market-place, flanked on either side by the houses of the Mahajuns (bankers) and richer natives, and terminated at one extremity by the Judge's Compound, and on the other by the road leading to the jail, the abiding place of 400 or 500 of the worst characters in the district.

A short distance beyond the market-place, is the Cutcherry Compound, a fine large open space of green, enclosed for the most part by trenches and about a mile in circumference. Here tokens of superior civilisation and Euro-

pean comfort take the place of mud huts and broken down galleries in the prospect, which is now not without pretensions to a certain amount of beauty. The eye wanders over a large expanse of brilliant verdure to the pretty little English cemetery at the bank of a handsome tank, while on either side the Government offices, the new school house, and the European bungalows and gardens give, with some fine large trees, importance and variety to the landscape. Beyond the Cutcherry Compound the road passes by a small mosque and some tombs of Mussulman saints towards Buxar, distant forty miles, and the station may be said to terminate at the pretty rural bungalow of the Sub-deputy opium agent*, built by himself and surrounded by a garden such as is rarely seen in India, tastefully arranged, well stocked with fruits and English

* Note 2.

vegetables, and abounding in curious shrubs and graceful creepers.

Such was the aspect of Arrah at the commencement of the Sepoy mutiny in 1857; perhaps even now its appearance is comparatively unchanged. A storm however, created by the evil passions of man, has swept over it, and tranquillity and confidence exist there no more, perhaps never will reappear.

The European inhabitants of Arrah and its neighbourhood, at the beginning of 1857, consisted of the usual officials attached to a civil station, with their families and several railway engineers and inspectors; there were also some Europeans in Government employ. The usual routine works went on; the ladies rode and drove about the station in the evening, and frequently travelled alone by palankeen dâk to other districts, though the native population was of a fierce and turbulent character, and

disputes and fights were of every day occurrence: desperate wounds and loss of life frequently attended these rencontres; the services of the civil surgeon were in continual request.

Yet, in spite of these warlike propensities of the natives, the Europeans remained unmolested throughout the whole extent of the district, and the very name of an Englishman, though its prestige had already from various causes somewhat diminished, was still a sufficient passport for security of life and property, and for the most part commanded a certain amount of respect. The white man was everywhere master, and held the position of, though not in effect, the lord of the soil.

This state of things was, however, not destined to endure. The great Sepoy mutiny burst forth like a thunderbolt over the length and breadth of the land; and like, alas! too

many other districts, Arrah became in its turn the theatre of a lawless insurrection. The treacherous and fiery element, hitherto concealed from motives of interest or fear, but always inherent in the bosom of the Asiatic, was suddenly let loose, and nourished by the lust of plunder; and, impelled by stormy fanaticism, spread its scorching flame over the country like the all-devouring fires of the American prairie.

It was not till May 1857, after the Meerut mutiny and the massacre at Delhi, that the Europeans at Arrah discovered that they too were standing on the brink of a volcano; and even for some time afterwards the full extent of their peril was not recognised by all, and yet that peril was no slight one. They were by themselves, in the midst of a warlike native population, composed for the most part of Sepoys and their relations. Three or four

hundred prisoners were in the jail; the Najeebs, or jail guard, were distrusted; more than suspicions were entertained of the disloyalty of Koowar Singh, the greatest Zemindar of the district, and looked up to by the Rajpoots as their chief*; while twenty-four miles distant, at Dinapore, were three regiments of Sepoys whose mutiny might daily be expected, and whose direct route lay through Arrah to the north-west.

The only signs of excitement at first observable in the station were the frequent congregating of the Europeans on the course at the time of the drive and little evening gatherings in the doctor's garden, where the events of the times were discussed. There was, however, a restless desire on the part of all for the latest scrap of news from Delhi, Calcutta, or

* Note 3.

Dinapore; and to satisfy this craving, telegraphic notices, extracts from newspapers, and even private letters, were in continual circulation; creating more or less anxiety, according to the importance of their several contents.

During the greater part of May and afterwards, constant official communication was kept up by the authorities with the neighbouring districts. On the 8th of June, a letter was received from the commissioner of Patna, stating that an outbreak among the native troops was expected to take place at Dinapore.* In consequence of this intelligence, the greater part of the Europeans at Arrah assembled together, and passed the night at the Judge's house, two or three only remaining at their own homes; and on the morrow a meeting of the male European population of the station

* Note 4.

and neighbourhood was held at the magistrate's house. At this conference the only decision arrived at was, that the women and children should at once be sent away to Dinapore, where the presence of 600 men of Her Majesty's 10th Regiment would ensure their safety; the magistrate (Mr. Wake) having beforehand provided ample boat accommodation for the whole of the defenceless party to proceed viâ the Ganges, which was thought safer than the direct route. Various opinions, nevertheless, were offered as to what further steps should be taken in the emergency. The Government officers having declared their intention not to abandon the station, some few individuals desired that a house should be temporarily fortified, and that the residents should therein abide the result of the expected revolt. Others again proposed that the Europeans should form themselves into extempore cavalry corps, to fight,

skirmish, reconnoitre, or fly, according to the process of events. Their opponents, on the other hand, suggested, with some show of reason, the possibility that the horses might not stand fire; that the unpractised cavaliers might do them or themselves a mischief with their own swords; or that if, during the anticipated flight or skirmish, an unfortunate fell from his horse, there would be considerable difficulty to pick him up again. These cavaliers however, it must be confessed, had not been accustomed to ride across country; their arguments, therefore, were treated with becoming contempt by the equestrian majority. In short, nothing was determined. When the magistrate at length asked, "Who will remain and act with us?" but one voice replied, "I will." "Thank you, Sir," said Mr. Wake; "what is your name?" "My name is Cock." The appropriateness of the cognomen caused a

smile, and in the sequel the speaker proved himself a thoroughly game bird. No others followed his example, and the meeting broke up without satisfactory result. All of the non-officials there present, with exception of two hereafter to be named, made the best of their way, some by boat, some on horseback, to Dinapore, carrying with them a formidable battery of double-barrelled guns and revolvers, and leaving the party at Arrah reduced to eight men, who afterwards took up their abode together at the Judge's house. These eight were Mr. Littledale, the judge; Mr. Coombe, the officiating collector; Mr. Wake, the magistrate; Mr. Halls, the civil surgeon; Mr. Colvin, the assistant magistrate; Mr. Field, the sub-deputy opium agent; with Messrs. Kelly and Tait, of the Civil Engineers*; the

* Note 5.

last two, though compelled by no duty, having voluntarily remained to support the Government officers, and assist in preserving order in the station.

In the evening, the ladies proceeded in buggies and carriages to the place of embarkation, whence, escorted by Mr. Boyle and accompanied by some other fugitives, both male and female, who had previously arrived at the river, they departed in the guard-boat to Dinapore, which they reached in safety, and were kindly received by Lieut-Colonel Fenwick, of Her Majesty's 10th, and the Rev. Mr. Burge, the chaplain of the district.

The departure and safe embarkation of the ladies and children removed a great weight from the minds of the few men who remained at Arrah, in the Judge's house; and on the 10th of June, had any stranger seen them assembled at the dinner-table of their hospitable

host, he would scarcely have suspected the serious nature of the crisis which had brought them together.

Their numbers were increased on the 11th by the return of Mr. Boyle (the resident railway engineer) from Dinapore, Mr. Armstrong, the assistant sub-deputy opium agent, having previously arrived from Patna. This last, though he had met the whole band of heavy armed fugitives in full retreat on his road, still pressed on alone to Arrah, to share the fate of the other officers of the station, who, in acknowledgment, conferred on him a brevet rank, and always addressed him by the title of "General;" his presence added greatly to the cheerfulness of the little circle, and much regret was felt by all when, after a few weeks, he returned to Patna by Government order; he was succeeded by Mr. Anderson. A more serious permanent loss was also sustained by

the departure of Kelly, the Ajax of the garrison, "himself a host," who, the danger of the revolt at Dinapore becoming seemingly less imminent, was compelled by his duties, as railroad engineer, to leave the station. With the exception of the above arrivals and departures, the party at Mr. Littledale's remained unchanged.

Our limits will not allow us to take more than a brief survey of the manner in which day after day of painful suspense passed by at the Judge's house. Yet the period must not be left unnoticed, for to the exertions and watchfulness of that little band, sometimes eight, sometimes nine, and never more than ten in number, and to the untiring energy of the superior officers, are due the preservation of the town from plunder and anarchy, the retention of the prisoners in the jail, the restraint upon the disaffected jail-guard, and the continuance of public business for more than six weeks; for

up to the time when the arrival of a hostile army and the rebellion of almost the entire district forced this little band of Europeans to cast away all considerations but those of self-defence, property remained safe, and disturbances were unknown in the station.

The first step taken by the magistrate was to secure a regular and rapid communication between Arrah and Dinapore on the one side, and Buxar on the other. For this purpose "Eckas (light bamboo carts) and messengers were stationed at different parts of the road in addition to the usual Government dâk.

The next point was to prevent panic and disturbance in the town; this was attained by carrying on the public business as usual during the day, and at night by an increased force of native police and watchmen, and by a vigilant patrol of Europeans. To these last, this nightly patrol was, owing to their paucity of numbers,

most wearying. The night was divided into four watches of two hours each, commencing at nine o'clock P.M., when two of the party, armed and mounted, went over all parts of the town and about three miles of the Dinapore road; a fresh pair relieved these at eleven P.M., and so on till five A.M., the first couple having frequently to take the last watch in addition to their own; besides this arrangement, one or another kept watch in the house throughout the night.

The natural result of these *pervigilia* displayed itself by a considerable tendency to sleep during the day, at all hours of which some of the garrison might have been seen courting repose in every possible attitude, in every practicable locality, and in every variety of undress: the weather being oppressively hot, the nearer the costume approached to the primitive "Adamite," the greater seemed the contentment of

the individual. Letter writing, reading, and, as a desperate resource, float-fishing in the tank, filled up any intervals of leisure till the dinner hour, when all met together and formed generally a cheerful, if not a joyous party.

One of them writes of their condition as follows:—"Judge's, June 11th. Here we are all right and very comfortable! W——'s arrangments are perfect. We get information from all sides. The Sikhs (sent from Patna for the treasure) came in this morning, and we knew of their approach many hours before their arrival. L—— is most kind and hospitable. We have horse patrols throughout the night. I myself, not being an equestrian, promenaded round the station on foot, visiting the collectorate and jail. The table in what was the billiard-room bristles with weapons of all descriptions. We had a merry dinner yesterday; your letter (the first news) telling of the safe

arrival of you all at Dinapore, tended much to promote our comfort. What a night you must have had of it in that abominable boat! B—— came in this evening. I always expected him back. The town is quiet, the Mahajuns in a stew, and the population generally in a state of excessive curiosity, crowds staring into the Compound when the gates are open. Fifteen or twenty horses are tethered to trees and bamboos in the said enclosure, so that there is some life in the scene."

Similar extracts to the above, and a portion of a diary which has been kindly submitted to our perusal, enable us to give a brief sketch of the principal incidents which occurred while the party remained at the Judge's house; one day, however, passed much the same as another, and long ere their period of probation had concluded, all were heartily weary of the monotony and uncertainty of their position. At one A.M.

on June 12th, 100 Sikhs, who had been sent from Patna for the purpose, escorted thither treasure to the amount of five lacs of rupees. The Arrah party were glad at the time to get rid both of the money and men, little imagining that, at a future period, the steadfast and gallant behaviour of those very Sikhs or their comrades would be mainly instrumental in saving the lives of all the Europeans in the station.

It was some time about the middle of June that rumours were first heard at Arrah of the taking of Delhi, as well as of the mutiny of the 6th Bengal Native Infantry at Allahabad; unfortunately the bad news proved true, and the good false. Information too arrived that a rising of the Sepoys at Dinapore was expected on the 15th; it being said that another "lucky day" for them would not occur for two months. "We are therefore," says a letter from Arrah,

dated June 14th, "keeping good watch, and obtain intelligence from all quarters, thanks to W——, who is a most active and efficient officer, and well fitted for the emergency. Twenty irregular cavalry arrived here to-day, en route for Buxar, to take care (!) I suppose, of the stud; our people there have entrenched themselves in a bungalow near the river, the old fort being too large for them to defend. There is no occasion for you to tell us to keep up our spirits, for there is no lack of them among our little party."

Our narrative has hitherto treated of what took place at Arrah immediately after the first alarm of mutiny at Dinapore, and it will hereafter be seen how the bold determination of the few gentlemen above named to remain from the very beginning at their posts,—a determination none the less bold because the expected emergency was for a time delayed,—enabled

them afterwards to form the nucleus of that small body of men, Europeans and Sikhs, whose defence at Arrah against the overwhelming force of a savage and merciless foe is already an episode in history.

The 16th or 17th June saw the completion of a work which afterwards exercised an important influence on the fate of the few residents at Arrah, and indirectly on the future of the entire district. As has before been stated, it was the opinion of a small minority, that a house should be put into a state of defence, and that in the event of mutiny or disturbance, the Europeans should take shelter therein and endeavour to make a temporary stand; this proposal being negatived, at the time, by the majority. There was, however, fortunately one of the party who holding the above opinion had the resolution to act upon it, and *singly*, possessed the means of carrying his plans into

effect. This was Mr. Boyle, the railway engineer, who collected several cartloads of new bricks, and built up with them the verandah arches of a small two-storied building, originally destined for a billiard room, and distant sixty yards from his own house. The new walls, though without mortar or cement of any kind, were artistically constructed, and formed a very sufficient defence against a musket bullet. The low arches beneath were, with the exception of rather a spacious loophole, entirely bricked up, while on the upper floor, between the pillars, a sort of breastwork was formed, upon which numerous sand-bags were placed, having intervals left between them for the guns of the besieged. Other arrangements were carried out in the interior. Into this extemporised fortification, Mr. Boyle conveyed a large supply of rice, grain, biscuits, and water, with a small quantity of brandy and beer.

It was then proposed that the party should change its quarters from the Judge's house to this building, or, at all events, to Mr. Boyle's residence, so as to be prepared for any emergency; but there were many and reasonable objections to such a proceeding, independent of a general unwillingness on the part of all to leave the comfortable quarters where they had experienced such kindly hospitality. First, the sudden migration of the Europeans would probably have led to panic and disorder in the town, which contingencies had hitherto been prevented as much by the central position of the Judge's house, as by the continual nightly patrol. Secondly, the situation of the new fortress was singularly uncalculated for defence against superior numbers, commanded as it was in front by the large dwelling-house in its vicinity, and hemmed in on the other sides by

trees, out-houses, and garden-walls, behind which the besiegers could carry on their measures for the destruction of the garrison, with entire security to themselves. The sequel will show that the latter of these objections was not unfounded, but it will also testify how Mr. Boyle's enterprise and forethought proved of signal service to his companions, and his imperfect fortification one of the many providential circumstances which, in the end, secured the safety of them all.

For some weeks after the construction of the little fortress, all things went on as before. On June 20th, a letter arrived from the Commissioner, stating that the treasure at Patna was about to be removed, and that there was apprehension that an *émeute* would then take place among the Sepoys. Reports also were rife that Koowar Singh was tampering with the 40th Native Infantry; while letters from Buxar

stated that numbers of Sepoys were flocking at that side into Shahabad.

The 21st of June brought chequered news: there had been a signal defeat of the rebels before Delhi, with the capture of twenty-five of their guns; but in the Santhal district, Sir Norman Leslie had been murdered by his own men, and two of his officers wounded. Mirzapore had been abandoned by most of the European residents. There was disastrous news from Neemuch: mutinies at Peshawur, Shahjehangunge, Futtehpore, Tusedgunge and Sultanpore in Oude. Alarms too of danger in the more immediate neighbourhood of Arrah were abundant: on June 22nd, as Messrs. Littledale and Field were just starting on their usual patrol, they met an express with letters, stating that reports were in circulation that a simultaneous rising of the Sepoys and Mahommedan population would take place in all

quarters of the district on the following day, and that several influential natives at Patna and Chuprah (about sixteen miles from Arrah) were implicated. The morrow, however, although the centenary anniversary of the battle of Plassey, passed off quetly at Arrah, with the exception of a furious dust-storm, which filled the houses with dust, and almost choked the inmates. Every day now brought its budget of intelligence, by turns exciting indignation, pity, and admiration.

A dreadful massacre of Europeans was reported from Cawnpore. The ladies and children from Fyzabad, after suffering incredible hardships, had arrived in a state of utter destitution at Dinapore; and the gallant Tucker, of the civil service, had fallen gloriously at his post, after having singly killed twenty of his enemies. Each post brought news of fresh disasters; but bright examples of woman's

uncomplaining fortitude and man's devoted heroism were of every-day occurrence. The Anglo-Saxon gloried in his race!

The 1st of July brought tidings to Arrah of the decease of Mr. Garrett, the opium agent at Behar, a kind-hearted, straightforward man, brother-in-law to the Lieut.-Governor of Bengal. The event threw a gloom over the spirits of several of the Arrah garrison, who knew his worth, and had experienced his cheerful hospitality. The excitement consequent on the anticipated insurrection at Patna, and the constant worry and annoyance to which he was exposed, no doubt accelerated his death.

On the night of the 3rd, Dr. Lyell was murdered, and his body disfigured by sword cuts, in the streets of Patna. This gallant gentleman, on hearing of a disturbance in the town, rode at once to the place, and, being considerably in advance of the Sikh police who accompanied

him, was at once surrounded and cut down by the fanatical mob. Many of the villains, however, afterwards paid the forfeit of their crimes. After hearing of the above catastrophe, the duties of the night watchers in the streets at Arrah appeared more dangerous, for there was no safeguard either against the desperate fanatic or the concealed assassin, and they might be shot down at any moment on their rounds. The patrol, however, continued as before. Between two and three o'clock in the morning of July 8th, a tremendous tumult and shouting was heard in the town, apparently in the direction of the jail. All the Europeans at the Judge's promptly got up and armed themselves, thinking that the decisive moment had arrived, and that the anticipated insurrection had commenced. The Judge and the magistrate rode at once to the jail to see what was the matter, and soon reappeared with intelli-

gence that the prisoners in some of the wards, for no other cause than their own amusement, had set up this horrible outcry; that these turbulent gentry were safely locked up, and that the town itself was perfectly tranquil. This little alarm served to keep the garrison on the *qui vive*, and was consequently not without its use, for a sense of security and weariness of what seemed unnecessary watchfulness began to creep into the minds of all, and the cry of "Wolf! wolf!" from Patna and Dinapore having been so often heard without the appearance of danger, began after a time to be almost disregarded. Still the peril was the same as before. The three Sepoy regiments still threatened from Dinapore; the crisis was in fact approaching; and the "wolf" at last came.

After breakfast on the morning of the 17th an anonymous communication was found on the table in the Judge's office; and, singularly

enough, all the information contained in it afterwards proved to be correct. The letter stated that Ali Kurreem (a noted zemindar of Gya, who had latterly made his escape from Patna, in consequence of the discovery of a treasonable correspondence between him and a police jemadar in Tirhoot) had arrived at Jugdeespore, the dwelling-place of Koowar Singh; that Koowar Singh himself was concerned in an intended rising of the Sepoys, which was *certain* to take place on the 25th of July; and that if the house of his agent, Kaleeprosad, at Arrah, were searched, letters confirmatory of the latter part of this story (about the bribes, &c.) might be found. On receipt of this intelligence Messrs. Littledale, Wake, Colvin, Halls, and Tait at once started off in a dog-cart through the town, to the house named. Kaleeprosad was absent; many of his

papers, however, were seized and inspected, but proved to be of no importance.

On the 22nd, news arrived of the occupation of Cawnpore by General Havelock, and of the second horrible massacre of women and children by the infamous Nana Sahib.

On the evening of the 25th, the following laconic epistle, directed "by express urgent," was received by the Judge:

"*To the Judge or Senior Civil Officer, Arrah.*

"Dinapore, 25th July, 1857.

"Sir—A revolt among the native troops at Dinapore is expected to occur this day. Stand prepared accordingly.

"Your obedt. servant,

"W. Lydiard, Major.

"A. A. General."

This looked serious, but the party at Arrah

still had hopes that the Sepoys would be not only hotly pursued, but that they would not be able to cross the Soane, which river, as before stated, intersected the road between Arrah and Dinapore, and was now considerably swollen by the rains. A railway engineer, who resided on the river's bank, having promised the magistrate, in the event of a rising, to destroy all the boats. These hopes, however, proved fallacious. The revolt took place, the boats were not destroyed, the Sepoys were unpursued, and early on the morning of the 26th (Sunday) accounts came in that the rebels were crossing the river, and had fired upon a messenger of the magistrate. Later in the day (about ten o'clock) Messrs. Delpeiroux and Hoyle, two railway inspectors, who lived on the Arrah side of the Soane, with another man, came spurring into the Judge's compound. Their story was brief, that the Sepoys had

passed the river in force, were then engaged in burning and destroying the railway works and neighbouring bungalows, and that they themselves had fled for their lives; the number of the mutineers was not known, nor any particulars of the outbreak. The Judge and the rest, still not wishing to abandon the station, determined to proceed at once to Mr. Boyle's fortification; accordingly the dog-cart was once more put into requisition, and the greater part of the arms having been deposited therein, was driven through the town to the rendezvous, escorted by the Sikhs * and a few Europeans on horseback. An attack was somewhat apprehended, but none was made, though, as the little troop marched through the streets, the population gazed in crowds, indifferent and careless spectators, or awed by the appearance of the armed force.

* Note 6.

The Europeans afterwards assembled at Mr. Boyle's house, where they remained a few hours engaged in writing letters to friends both in India and England, and sending a few extra stores into the fort, among these was a five dozen case of port and sherry belonging to the doctor, which, not having been unpacked, was taken in at the eleventh hour, and its contents afterwards conduced not a little to the health and spirits of the garrison, worn out as both frequently were by heat, impure air, and exhaustion. The Sikhs also took in a supply of water for their own use.

Early in the afternoon two or three European women and children who had unfortunately returned to the district, sought shelter with their husbands at the station; the Judge and magistrate determined that these should at once be sent in palankeens to the boats, the road on the side towards the Ganges being

still open. This was a most judicious decision, for had the women remained, their situation would have been most wretched for, besides the impossibility of giving them a separate apartment, or indeed any privacy, fright, privation, and disease, would probably have put an end to their lives ere the termination of the siege.

The Europeans and Sikhs were joined at Mr. Boyle's by Mr. Cock and Messrs. Godfrey and Da Costa, and by Syed Azimoodeen Hossein, a Mussulman gentleman, the deputy-collector of Arrah, who, with a rare fidelity, resolved to enter the fort with the Europeans; a young boy, his servant, refused to leave him, and together with another native (Mr. Anderson's bearer) was afterwards most useful in cooking such provisions as the besieged could command, and in general attendance upon all. In the evening the whole party, Europeans, Eurasians, and Sikhs slept and watched by

turns in the little fortress. The following account of their proceedings therein, and of some subsequent events, is extracted from a private letter, written a few weeks after the scenes which it describes:— "... We were altogether nine Europeans, six Eurasians, and one native (the deputy-collector); there were also fifty Sikh police with us, whom we *hoped* were true men, but could not at first be sure; afterwards they proved themselves to be real sterling metal. ... That night (Sunday, the 26th of July) we went into our fortified billiard-room and bricked ourselves up. Had the Sikhs who were with us been treacherous, they might have eaten us up for a breakfast. On Monday morning up came the Sepoys, they broke open the jail, looted the treasury of 70,000 rupees, and were joined by the jail guards, prisoners, and hundreds of bad characters from the neighbouring villages. [It after-

wards appeared that the bulk of the three native regiments, the 7th, 8th, and 40th, had, through the apathy, to call it by no harsher name of the general and his advisers, been deliberately suffered to walk off unmolested with their arms and ammunition, and that too in the face of three or four large guns, and six hundred European troops.]

"All these assembled on a rising ground, about 600 yards from and in full view of our position by sound of trumpet, and then moved down steadily towards us till they got within 200 yards, when their trumpets sounded a charge, and down they came at the double quick, shouting like demons, and firing as fast as they could.

"Our side, however, soon began to reply from their double-barrelled guns, and the carbines of the Sikhs, and some of the rascals were soon knocked over. This brought the multitude to

a stand still; and some more being hit, the greater part of them retreated into and behind a large house situated, most unfortunately for us, at sixty yards distance. The others took skirmishing order on our flanks and rear, where they were well sheltered by trees, outhouses, and garden walls, whence they kept up a continual fire all day, and occasionally throughout the night. The first rush of the vast force was certainly the most fearful; and, judging of the feelings of others by my own, I suspect few of us had much hope beyond that of selling our lives as dearly as possible. Indeed, had the rebels had the pluck to advance, they might have kicked down our defences, or have scaled the walls and overwhelmed us by their weight of numbers. Fortunately, however, they had *not;* and, when this their first attack had been repulsed, our hopes began to revive, especially as we all escaped provi-

dentially without a wound, and expected that relief must shortly come from Dinapore. A most dirty-looking set were we after this attack; and for several successive days, most of us in shirts and trowsers covered with plaster and brickdust, knocked over us by the hail-storm of bullets; for, though all of us were unhurt, yet there was scarcely one who had not experienced two or three narrow escapes. Three inches difference in a bullet's direction, on two separate occasions, and I should not be writing to you now: on a third, a brick behind which I was squinting, to get a shot at a Sepoy, was shivered by a ball, a great quantity of the fragments and brickdust flying into my face and eyes, making me for a second or two fancy myself hit. Many others of our party could tell similar stories.

"After the first day but few of our opponents were killed, and those by long rifle shots, or by

snap shots from the top of the building, when a sepoy-looking arm or leg was for a moment visible. They did not, however, give many chances of this kind. During the entire siege, I should think that some twenty or thirty of the villains might have been put *hors de combat.* I should however add that I speak under correction, for I believe that some of the fire-eaters on our side claim nearly that number as their individual share of the slaughter.

"Wake, the magistrate of Arrah, was, from the buoyancy of his spirits, the life and soul of our party, and a great favourite with the Sikhs. Though often exposing himself more than necessary, he only fired off his gun twice, being as he said quite disgusted with his performance as a fusilier.

"The enemy harassed us by occasional shots throughout the night, and in the morning astonished us by a loud taunting shout, followed

up by a formidable bang and a splintering of bricks. They had in fact brought two small cannon (4-pounders) to bear upon us, and again for awhile we thought all was up. After a shot or two, we got more accustomed to them, as we found our main walls tolerably proof, and the bricked-up intervals were not hit more than once in a dozen times. Still it was not agreeable to have two cannon firing at us in cross directions, while the rascally gunners had a complete shelter, formed by bricks, earth, and our own tables and chairs. One gun was sixty yards distant, the other about 150; the balls from the latter scarcely hit the house at all, but went over with a whizz and concussion that shook every part. Afterwards they made a hole in the garden-wall behind us, and through it got one of the guns to bear at sixteen yards; even then, however, the shot did not penetrate the main walls, and

only hit the loose bricks occasionally, which were not always beaten down, as we had strengthened them from within.

"Finally, on the fifth day of the siege, the fellows hoisted up one of the guns on the top of the large house opposite, which was rather serious, as a shot could now be sent over our defences right into the middle of us. But they were not good shots and were not permitted to take aim at leisure, Boyle, Field, Anderson, and others of our best marksmen being continually on the top of our fortress, blazing away on and about the said piece of artillery. We found, nevertheless, a good many of the larger shot, both at the time and afterwards, both inside and embedded in the walls. If the fire from the cannon had proved very serious, there would have been a sally to spike them, if possible, though a large *ascites trocar* was

the only spike procurable, and such a use of it entirely *unprofessional*.

"Such is the history of the cannons which were brought against us, and which were continually fired during the whole siege, except for a few hours at night.

"About midnight on Wednesday, we heard regular vollies of musketry and a continuous dropping fire about two miles off, and we knew that relief had arrived; I myself, however, was not sanguine, as the night was pitch dark, and the sound of firing did not seem to approach, indeed rather the contrary. It soon ceased altogether. In fact, as we afterwards learnt, 400 men who had been sent in pursuit of the rebels from Dinapore, had, through the heedlessness of their officers and a too ardent desire to press on to our rescue, suffered themselves to be surprised and surrounded by ten times their force, as they were coolly walking into

the town of Arrah, without having taken the precaution of sending out scouts to the right and left, and that too on a dark night. The enemy, who were under cover of thick groves of trees, put one third of the relieving force *hors de combat* by the first volley, and utterly disorganised the whole.*

"The captain commanding and four other officers were almost immediately killed; the rest retreated as well as they could to the river, harassed all the way by the rebels, and obliged to leave many of the wounded on the road. The remainder of the party finally reached Dinapore in a pitiable state of dejection and fatigue. One of the Sikh police, who accompanied the force, contrived by stratagem to pass the rebel sentries and was drawn up by ropes into our stronghold. From him we learnt

* Note 7.

that the English had been surprised and driven back, but hoped that the check was only temporary, and that they would come on again after waiting perhaps for guns or reinforcements. Had we known the full extent of the catastrophe and afterwards how entirely our case had been given up as hopeless by the Dinapore and Patna authorities, we should, I think, have despaired of relief, and perhaps sallied out in a rash endeavour to get away. Rash and fruitless indeed must such an attempt have proved, for we were watched from all quarters, and when once outside, must have been surrounded and cut up. Indeed had any so escaped, it would have been only by good fortune and swiftness of foot; the slow, sick or wounded, must have perished, and been abandoned where they fell. Happily we did not know the worst, and so determined to hold out while provisions lasted, and then, as a

dernier ressort, to try to break through and escape.

"I cannot give you a detailed account of the events of the whole week; some time however, about Wednesday, we found that the insurgents, under shelter of some out-houses, which came up close to our walls, were commencing a mine. What did some of our gallant Sikhs do? They stealthily stole out at night and brought in the mining tools, and as we were pressed for water, conceived the idea of digging a well inside the house. This well, eighteen feet deep, was completed in twelve hours; plenty of water was obtained and all of us, Sikhs and Europeans, had a regular wash, an inadmissible luxury before. The water running down on the outside of the house must have somewhat astonished our foes, if they expected to reduce us by thirst. To proceed: every night we were on the look out. Almost every morning, the wretches had

some new contrivance for our destruction. One time they tried to smoke us out by burning capsicums to the windward; another time in the middle of the night, they startled us by a horrible shout '*Maro! maro!*' (kill, kill,) and we frequently thought they were coming to the assault.

"Luckily for us and for *some* of them, they did not venture on a close attack.

"The thing which gave us most apprehension was the mine, which we knew was advancing, but could not prevent its progress, though we countermined under the foundation of the house, and as we afterwards found, our excavation was immediately beneath that of the enemy. The last day or two of the siege, the mutineers confined themselves to firing a few rifle shots from the top of the opposite house, and to keeping up a pretty constant cannonade; no one of us however, was hurt, though an Englishman,

(Mr. Hoyle) was struck on the chest by a spent bullet, which had previously passed through a thick door and a mattrass; he was considerably surprised for the moment, though the ball failed to raze the skin.

"The discomforts of our situation were much aggravated by the vicinity of four dead horses, which, when living, some short-sighted mortals had tied up to be ready in case flight were practicable. The poor animals were at once shot by the Sepoys, and the effluvia, arising from their rapid decomposition, was most horrible; had the wind blown from their quarter, we could scarcely have escaped serious illness. Fortunately, the wind came thence for three hours only, but then the stench was deadly. I said, 'This is the worst enemy of all, we shall be struck down with fever or cholera.' However, I administered a dose of port wine to the garrison and took one myself, and as the wind soon changed, we got

rid of some portion of the smell; what remained however, was sufficiently pestiferous and the concomitant plague of flies very troublesome and disgusting. I may here mention the terrible retribution which befel one of our adversaries who was shot within seventy yards of the house; his companions did not dare (or care) to carry him off. The man was not quite dead, and for nearly two days, we could see him feebly endeavouring to scare off the kites and crows, which appeared however to disregard his efforts, he died at length, but who shall analyse his bodily and mental sufferings ere death came to his relief. *We* had no pity to throw away upon him.

"At last, when we almost despaired of succour, one night a voice called out from behind the trees that there was 'some news,' and at the same time requested us not to shoot. Two men then, on our invitation, came under the

walls and informed us that the Sepoys had been defeated about six miles off, towards Buxar, by Major Vincent Eyre (the Cabul man), and that, doubtless, our deliverers would arrive in the morning. This news brought joy into our hearts, though at first we were doubtful of our informants, as one of them, however, suffered himself to be drawn up within our walls, and as the enemy seemed to have left the spot, things looked more cheerful and reassuring. About midnight a sally was made by some of our party, who found no Sepoys, but brought in the two guns which had so long annoyed us, also a large quantity of powder. They discovered that the enemy's mine extended up to our walls, and that the powder and fusee were prepared, so that, had the relieving force been delayed a few hours, the house probably would have been blown about our ears, for though our mine was immediately

beneath that of the besiegers, yet it was very possible we might not have heard their proceeding in time to anticipate the explosion.

"The mine was of course at once destroyed, as well as some out-houses which had afforded shelter to our foes, and we remained on the watch till morning, when, about seven o'clock, two of the volunteers who were with Major Eyre rode in waving their hats. Their advent opened our mouths, and we gave three hearty cheers.*

"Numbers of the townspeople, servants, and others, soon appeared, bringing in arms of all sorts, some wounded Sepoys and other traitors and two more cannons, which had been just mounted on our own buggy wheels.

"We now certainly heard that some friends at Buxar (the Hon. Captain Hastings and others) had persuaded Major Eyre's *non*

* Note 8.

invitum to deviate from his course up the river, and come over with three guns, a few artillerymen, and 150 men of Her Majesty's 5th Fusiliers to our rescue, and that this gallant little band, with the aid of a dozen mounted volunteers from Buxar, had twice defeated the enormous odds opposed to them.

"It appears that the rebels thought to entrap this party, as they did the poor fellows from Dinapore; but they reckoned without their host, the gallant major not being the man to be caught asleep. They did, however, nearly surround the English, and our deliverers were for some time in great peril; the fire was hot and sustained, and the enemy made an attempt or two to get at the guns. At this crisis the soldiers were ordered to charge, and the wretches dared not abide the onset, but bolted in all directions, collecting finally at Jugdeespore, in the heart of the jungle, the strong-

hold of Koowar Singh, whom I have mentioned before. That morning was a cheerful one for us all, and it was very gratifying to hear the comments of the officers, and to exchange hearty shakes of the hand, some of them declared that our defence was 'the finest thing they had ever heard of.' In the course of the day the Sepoy prisoners were tried by court-martial and hanged, after which we all bivouacked in the collector's house and garden, abandoning the place which had so long sheltered us, the major thinking the spot unfavourable, even for our increased force.*

"It was thought probable that we might be attacked in the night or, at all events, in the morning, for the insurgents still outnumbered us in the proportion of twenty to one, and we did not know how completely they were for the time disorganised.

* Note 9.

"After this we rested for a day or two, and lived in a very primitive style, having very few chairs, very few bedsteads, no punkahs, and only some stray knives, forks, and plates, of many and various patterns. It was sad to survey the interiors of our several houses; outside they were untouched, the scoundrels having preserved them with a view of permanent residence. Every article of furniture was, however, taken away or destroyed; the floors were covered ankle-deep with torn books, papers, and pictures. Out of about two hundred and fifty volumes which we possessed, not one remained uninjured. Glass and crockery were found smashed in all directions; our horses were all stolen, and most of the carriages. I found my brougham in a dilapidated state, two of the wheels having been taken off to form a gun-carriage; these I afterwards recovered, and sold the whole con-

cern at Dinapore for 13*l.*, thinking myself lucky to get even that.

"The little plate we possessed was saved: I had given it in charge to a table-servant, who buried it in his hut. All my old engravings and my father's drawings were torn up and destroyed. In fact we were all stripped of everything; even of clothes we had a *very* scanty supply, and were obliged both to borrow and lend.

"After a day or two, the wounded were sent on elephants to Dinapore, and Major Eyre was kind enough to give me the charge of them, so that I had an opportunity of getting a glimpse of L——, who, as you may suppose, had been in some *little* anxiety about her unworthy husband, on whom however she was again destined to set eyes. She must tell her own story. Everybody at Dinapore had given us at Arrah up for lost, excepting L—— herself, who had *one of her presentiments*

that I (I suppose being a bad shilling) should turn up again. I did not remain long at Dinapore, thinking it my duty to join the three or four Arrah civilians who remained with Major Eyre. Accordingly on the second evening I started back again, and arrived just in time to join the party, now reinforced by 200 of H. M's 10th Regiment, and to proceed with them to the attack of Jugdeespore, it being my first campaign.

"The first day of the march we started at two P.M., and encamped for the night on a tolerably open plain about eight miles from Arrah. The next morning we got up at sunrise, and proceeded along some very bad roads, often covered with mud and water, through which it was slow and laborious work to drag the guns, till our advanced guard reached a brook, near which and on both sides of us the enemy were assembled in force, though for the

most part concealed by a thick jungle and their entrenchments. After a round or two of grape from the guns in advance, the interchange of shots became pretty rapid, and the Sepoys' fire gradually extended on both sides to the entire length of our line of march, fortunately without very good aim; the bullets nevertheless often whizzed very uncomfortably near us, and several soldiers were wounded. This state of things, however, did not last long; our advance, about 100 men of H. M.'s 5th Regiment, charged at a run, in skirmishing order, while 100 of the 10th, with a screeching shout, turned the flank of the rebels, and sent them flying into the jungle. On our rear, Sergeant Melville, of the Bengal Artillery, by two or three admirably-aimed shells from a howitzer, completely scattered a large body who were trying to get behind us; and the whole Sepoy force shortly made a rapid retreat. They

maintained a running fight for a short time, through a dense jungle and the streets of a village, which they ought to have defended against ten times our number, and at last disappeared altogether, leaving the large village of Jugdeespore and the house of Koowar Singh in our hands.

"From that day we never saw them again, but afterwards found that they had at once rapidly decamped in the direction of Sasseram. We remained several days at Jugdeespore, principally, I fancy, for the sake of the wounded, some of whom were seriously injured—indeed, two or three afterwards died—perhaps also to give the major time to communicate with the authorities at Dinapore. We then, after hanging a few more rebels, blew up and destroyed Koowar Singh's palace, and a new Hindoo temple in its vicinity; set fire to the village in several parts and departed, following the route

of the rebels towards Sasseram. Orders, however, I believe, came to Major Eyre to return to Arrah; whence I and some of the civil part of the community went to Dinapore; our brave commander and the soldiers proceeding *viâ* Buxar to Cawnpore and Lucknow, where under the veteran Havelock they have again and again been victorious. God bless them all! So much for my campaigning, by which I was considerably knocked up, having had to march on foot the greater part of the way. My palankeen was given up to an officer who was lamed temporarily by a kick from a horse."

The foregoing narrative gives a tolerably correct sketch of what passed at Arrah from the arrival of the mutineers to the departure of Major Eyre. Being a private correspondence, it may appear to treat rather of personal adventure than of the doings and sufferings of the whole party, as, however, it was written

while the events it relates were yet fresh in the memory, it is perhaps a better description than writing at a later date, we are now able to give. Some omissions, indeed, we shall endeavour to supply, and make a few brief remarks upon the whole affair.

All who were shut up in the little fort shared the peril, work, and privation pretty equally among them. There were no recognised leaders, though, from their respective offices, the Judge and magistrate were held in greater consideration than the rest; Mr. Boyle's opinion too, from his engineering skill and resources, carried great weight in all matters connected with the defences of the place. The Judge was undoubtedly the superior officer, but as for the six weeks previous to the siege, the bulk of the labour, all the executive arrangements, the intelligence department and the management of the Sikhs and police, had,

by virtue of his office, fallen to the share of the magistrate, the former gentleman forbore to take the lead to which his rank in the service entitled him, or to interfere with Mr. Wake's measures; he gave, however, his cordial support, and set a good example to all the garrison; wherever hard work was to be done, wherever additional risk was to be incurred, there the Judge was among the foremost. He accompanied Major Eyre afterwards as a volunteer, and, if his name has not been more prominently mentioned in connection with Arrah and Juggeespore, his own modesty must bear the blame. Had Antony been Brutus, and Brutus Antony, such had not been the case. It would be superfluous here to speak of the merits of Messrs. Wake and Boyle; they have made themselves known to the world, and enough may be gathered from the foregoing pages to show that, whatever reward may be bestowed

on them by Government, such can scarcely be in excess of their deserts; but it is no less true that other names ought not to be forgotten.

Throughout the siege, Mr. Field's double-barrel was continually at work, and with fatal effect, both from above the breastwork and the more exposed roof of the building; one Sepoy he shot through the head, just visible at the corner of a wall; another, whom he severely wounded, was, while yet alive, attacked by the kites and crows, his miserable fate afterwards forming one of the foundation-stones of the fanciful superstructure of Anglo-Indian cruelties, recently built up by an antiquarian architect. Of others we may also speak; of Mr. Colvin, who, as Wake says in his despatch, "rested neither night nor day, and took on himself far more than his share of every disagreeable duty;" of Mr. Cock, always strong, active, and cheerful, ready alike for the musket

or the pickaxe, for the loophole or the well; of M. Delpeiroux, who worked, fought, and talked, with the buoyant vivacity peculiar to his French extraction; and of several more: but, where all did their best for the common cause, it would be invidious, if not difficult, to institute comparisons. Nevertheless, the gallant and simple-hearted Sikhs must not be passed by, whose conduct redounds as much to their own credit as to that of the gallant officer* by whom they were enrolled, and whose name they bear. Of a separate race and religion, with different sympathies, with every inducement, pecuniary, or otherwise, held out to them to be faithless, they remained true to their salt and their European comrades. While their countrymen in the upper provinces were instrumental in the preservation of India, these manly fellows stood by the Arrah Europeans in the hour of

* Major Rattray.

peril. Independent too of their fidelity, some of the most important measures for the safety of the garrison were originally designed and carried out by the Sikhs. By their stealthy sallies at night, some sheep were procured, and the enemy's own mining tools turned against him. They discovered the hostile mine, and countermined beneath it, and finally dug the well, the happy completion of which tended, perhaps, more than anything to the successful protraction of the defence. Their Jemadar (sub-lieutenant) Hooken Singh, a fine bearded fellow, six feet two inches high, was everywhere active, *Koochpurwa nahin* ("No harm done, no matter!") was his laughing sarcastic ejaculation after every unsuccessful cannon shot; and on one occasion he carried his contempt of the enemies so far as to pitch brickbats at them from the top of the house. He was slightly wounded in the hand.

Another Sikh too, on the second day of the siege, was struck by a musket bullet, which glanced from one of the lower loopholes and entered the back of his head, fracturing the skull and lodging on the brain; he apparently did well at the time, but died two months after at Dinapore. This was the only serious casualty which occurred among the besieged. Others were struck by bricks, and cut by falling glass; and the Judge got a nasty wound on the face by the recoil of his own gun, while firing almost perpendicularly from the top of the house.

Provisions, though tolerably plenteous, were not remarkable for quality. Feverish, jaded, bitten by musquitoes and flies, each man rose at early dawn from his couch on the floor (Sikhs and Europeans slept cheek by jowl), after having taken his share of watching during the night; he next generally proceeded to a

corner where tea was preparing, by means of a patent lamp. If fortunate, and among the first arrivals, he perhaps got a good half cup of tea; but as the pot was continually being filled up with water, without a corresponding supply of the "herb," the last applicants had to content themselves with little better than the pure element. A few biscuits, some parched grain, and a cheroot completed the breakfast; when the enemy's fire generally commenced for the day.

Dinner, at three o'clock, was an improvement on the former meal; rice and date, with a little chutney, forming a filling, if not very nutritive repast. To this was added on two days a portion of mutton; and each man had a quarter of a bottle of beer, the moment of drinking which was, perhaps, the most luxurious of the twenty-four hours. Plates being scarce,

four or five only could dine at once. The dining-room, a sort of pit formed by a small staircase, the lower end of which had been bricked up, was for some time thought the securest place in the house; till one day the diners were astonished by the appearance of a brass piano castor, which had been fired from one of the cannon, and came smashing through the thin wall, an unexpected and unwelcome guest. Providentially no one was hurt, the usual occupant of the stair opposite to where the missile penetrated being that day late for dinner.

During the progress of the siege, every means that could be suggested were put in execution to heighten and strengthen the defences. The outer breastwork was built higher, doors were taken off their hinges, and with them and some mattrasses, the three windows in front of the house were completely blocked up,

and rendered tolerably proof against bullets fired from the top of the opposite dwelling.

The mud from the well was used to strengthen the lower defences, and became a most efficient defence even against the cannon.

Some thousands of bullets and cartridges were also made, and many new loopholes cut for purposes of offence. A daily narrative of events was written in pencil on the wall of the little fort. This diary originated thus:— After the failure of the relieving force from Dinapore, two of the garrison, while conversing, expressed a wish that in the event of their own destruction (then considered more than probable) some record should remain of the defence; and one of them suggested the above journal, adding his fears that the Sepoys would not suffer the inscription to remain. Mr. Wake, however, who was passing at the time, caught at the idea, and at once commenced the

brief chronicle, which we believe is still in existence on the dilapidated wall.

To analyse the feelings of the besieged Europeans, during that painful week of peril and suspense, would be a vain endeavour. All, upon several distinct occasions, must have thought their last hour at hand; once, when they beheld the multitude of foes who rushed to the first attack; once, when they knew of the discomfiture of their friends from Dinapore; and many times when a regular assault was expected. At such moments men keep their thoughts locked in their own breasts. Seasons of depression, both physical and mental, were doubtless common to all, but in the hour of action, one determination, to resist to the last, animated the whole party, and, however apparently hopeless their situation, hope never totally forsook them. Had they no thoughts of a higher nature, no trust in an all-pervading Providence?

Surely yes! outward demonstration there was none; but they knew that to whatever straits they were reduced, there was *One* above, whose arm is always omnipotent to save; and to Him, who knoweth the secrets of the soul, many an unspoken prayer ascended in their troubles, and afterwards many a heart was silently lifted up in gratitude to that God who delivered them out of their distress.

We now take our leave of the Arrah garrison; but how shall we speak of that glorious band of fearless and true-hearted Britons, who, despising every danger, overcoming every obstacle, deaf to every timid suggestion, perhaps even to the orders of a superior*, still pressed onwards in their path of deliverance; twice fought and conquered an enemy twenty times their number, and accomplished the rescue of their countrymen! Gratitude forbids us to be silent, though

* Note 10.

well aware that all we can say must fail to do justice to the dauntless perseverance and military genius of an Eyre, to the valour and social virtues of such men as Hastings, Jackson, and L'Estrange, to the hardy intrepidity of the Volunteer, or to the world-known fame of the British soldier. Names are rushing to our pen! Scott, Oldfield, Lewis, Mason of the 5th, Eteson, and Melville of the Artillery, Siddale of the Stud, Wylde, Kelly, Nicholl, Barber, and Burrows of the Volunteers, with some 200 others, shared the perils of that brief campaign, and participated in the happiness of the result; —happiness, we say, for however grateful the moment of succour to the besieged, however pleasurable their emotions, the feelings of their deliverers must have been still more enviable at the successful issue of their noble and chivalrous exploit.

Many and great events, rapidly following one another in triumphant succession, have almost obliterated from memory the less stirring incidents which form the subject of the preceding pages.

The fall of Delhi; the two reliefs and final capture of Lucknow; the taking of Jhansi, Calpee, and Gwalior, both from the magnitude of their results and the number of British lives involved, have secured great and deserved distinction at the hands of the historian; while the melancholy catastrophe at Cawnpore preserves *that* name for ever from oblivion; yet, such grand achievements excepted, there are perhaps few events that, considering all the circumstances of the case, and relative numbers of men engaged, were more productive of immediate and tangible benefit to the British rule in India, than the successful defence at Arrah,

and concomitant victories of Major Eyre. This is a bold assertion, but the following considerations will go far towards its support.*

The time was the very crisis of the rebellion. All the available European troops were being hurried in small detachments, both by the river and the grand trunk road, to join the small force under Neill and Havelock. Delhi had not fallen; the whole of Behar and a great portion of Bengal, was defenceless; 600 men of Her Majesty's 10th Foot barely sufficed to protect Dinapore and Patna, the large Mussulman population of which and the surrounding districts was ripe for a revolt. Several native regiments too, both horse and foot, some of which afterwards took part in the rebellion, were scattered about Behar. The gain or loss of a day was of vital importance to either party.

* Note 11.

Suddenly the three regiments at Dinapore revolted and crossed the Soane with their arms. They were joined by Koowar Singh and his retainers, and an army of from 7,000 to 10,000 men arose as if by magic in Shahabad. Several courses were open to the Sepoys: to plunder Gyah and overrun Behar; to threaten Patna and Dinapore; to obstruct the communication and passage of troops on the grand trunk road; or to march up at once to co-operate with their "brothers" at Lucknow. Any of these plans carried into effect, might have added much to the difficulties of Government. A rapidly increasing hostile force was in fact placed between the English army and its resources.

It is now profitless to speculate upon the amount of mischief that the rebels, under Koowar Singh, at such a time and in such a position, might have been able to effect but for

the delay caused by the obstinate defence of the few civilians at Arrah, and the repeated victories of Major Eyre, which completely confounded the mutineers, and finally forced them from the district.

The efforts of a few hundred men, and the military genius of their commander, restored security to the district of Behar. Other native regiments afterwards revolted, and Jugdespore was again occupied by the Sepoys; but these were then looked upon rather as dangerous marauders, destined to be destroyed when it should be found convenient to attack them, than as threatening the future tranquillity of the district. Neither was the moral effect of the campaign at Arrah on the minds of the natives insignificant, to whom successful revolt against the British Government must have indeed seemed hopeless, when they saw the host of their countrymen kept at bay for seven

days by a few civilians and Sikh police; while the British troops, though numbered by scores, were more than a match in the field for almost as many thousands of the mutineers.

As a story, the defence at Arrah lacks the romantic interest which the presence of women and children has imparted to other episodes of the rebellion; nor is the sympathy of the multitude excited even by a melancholy list of killed and wounded; but though the besieged, by what almost seems the special intervention of a merciful Providence, escaped many horrors which had prevailed elsewhere, yet the actual peril to which they were exposed was imminent in the highest degree, while the danger was, in part at least, *voluntarily* incurred, the path of escape being open to the last. The battered condition of their diminutive fort bears ample testimony to the severity and perseverance of the attack, and abundant evidence exists to

show how hopelessly desperate their position was considered by the European community in India. In England intelligence was received of their total destruction, and for a brief period many were mourned for as dead by their friends.

Nor in considering our subject, should the character of the besiegers be forgotten; for these were not alone the offscourings of the bazaar and the refuse of the jail, but the warlike population of the Rajpoot villages, headed by perhaps the bravest chieftain who has appeared on the side of the rebellion. Added, too, to the retainers of the veteran Zemindar, was the bulk of three of the best disciplined native regiments — the only ones ever successful in the field against British troops — some of these same Sepoys, by the fierceness of their attack upon the 93rd Highlanders and the Naval Brigade, afterwards added much to

the renown of Sir William Peel and his brave companions, by whom, after a hard-fought action, the mutineers were defeated and beaten back.

The above is a tolerably correct account of the proceedings of the Europeans at Arrah, during the period immediately preceding, and subsequent to the revolt of the Sepoy regiments at Dinapore. We have been hampered in our relation, on the one hand by a fear of not doing justice to our countrymen, and on the other, having ourselves participated in the scenes described, by a desire to avoid the appearance of self-glorification in our description. It has, however, been our endeavour to give the reader a just impression of the facts related, and, if he be inclined to bring against us the accusation of egotism and vanity, we would reply to the first charge that our own part in the above transactions was not prominent, and that con-

sequently, in the foregoing pages, we have spoken rather of the actions of others than our own; to the second charge, we plead guilty; we *are* proud to claim a brief association with the defenders of Arrah and the captors of Juggeespore; nor are we disposed to deny that, hereafter when looking back upon past events and talking, perhaps by an English fire-side, of what then will be the great by-gone Sepoy rebellion, when telling of the hair-breadth escapes of some, the steadfast defence of others, and the perils or anxieties of all who bore a European name in India; it will be no small gratification to us to be able to add, though without the boast of the Trojan leader, "quorum pars fui."

NOTES.

NOTES.

Note 1.—It was at this part of the road that the European force under Captain Dunbar sent to relieve Arrah, were surprised at night by the Sepoys.

Note 2.—Mr. George Field.

Note 3.—Koowar Singh, a large landed proprietor in Shahabad owning several Pergunnahs in that district, at the time we write of was a fine noble-looking old man, about seventy-five years of age, though apparently feeble and worn out by the pain of a neuralgic complaint from which he had then suffered for several years. His manners were at once dignified and courteous and bore the stamp of real nobility, as far apart from the cringing servility of most Asiatics as from the purse-proud assumption of the Bengalee zemindar. He had been a great sportsman, and was much liked by the Europeans generally. He had in his early

days become deeply involved in debt, and his estates were heavily mortgaged. About 1845, or 1846, he was suspected of being concerned in what was called the Patna conspiracy. In 1854, or 1855, the government of Bengal, for the purpose of saving him from complete ruin, undertook the management of his estates, from the proceeds of which his creditors were to be gradually repaid, he, at the same time, promising to borrow several lacs of rupees for the purpose of paying off some of his debts. Eventually he failed to get this loan, and, shortly before the outbreak, government determined to have nothing more to do with the management of his estates; a final lawsuit was also decided against him in the Sudder Court, and he was left almost without resources. At this epoch he joined the mutinous Dinapore regiments, or perhaps persuaded them to revolt. During the time the Europeans at Arrah were shut up, Koowar Singh had several Christian Eurasian families in his power, all the members of which were found uninjured at his departure, indeed we are not aware that he ever participated in the atrocities which were generally committed by the rebels. His proceedings, after he left Arrah, will afford matter for the historian; even his opponents speak of his masterly retreat across the Ganges, when closely pur-

sued by the force under Sir E. Lugard, with respect. In this retreat the old lion received his death wound, but managed to reach Jugdeespore, where, after a brief interval, noted, however, by the defeat of a British force sent against him from Arrah; he died in the dwelling of his forefathers, amid his ancestral jungles.

Note 4.—The Sepoy regiments at Dinapore were the 7th, 8th, and 40th, B. N. I.

Note 5.—The above list sufficiently refutes an assertion, which, however, has been printed, that Arrah was defended mainly by the railway people and volunteers. All the government officers covenanted and uncovenanted remained from the first at the station; every measure was carried on by the direction of the judicial officers of the district, and, of the small party (sixteen) who were actually besieged, eleven were in government employ at Arrah.

Note 6.—These were fifty Sikhs who had been sent from Patna a few days before in charge of treasure.

Note 7.—The following letter, extracted from one of the journals of the day, gives a graphic account of this disastrous expedition :—

THE DISASTER AT ARRAH.

Patna, July 31.

"I thank God that I am alive and well and able to write you once more. I have been in great danger, and never expected to reach this place alive again, but God has been most merciful to me. As I dare say you would like to hear the whole story, I will begin at the beginning. About a week ago, as we have long anticipated, the three native regiments at Dinapore mutinied. The general, an old man in his second childhood, managed the whole affair very badly, or rather did nothing at all. No one knew who was in command of the Europeans, no one knew whom to look to for orders, the general was not to be found, and the consequence was that the three regiments managed to get clear off with their arms and ammunition, and almost without losing a single man! The general was advised and asked to send men after them, but this he altogether declined to do, and determined to keep every European in Dinapore, to keep good care of himself. A day or so after the mutineers left we heard that they had gone to Arrah, where they were attacking poor Wake and party, consisting of about twelve or thirteen Europeans and fifty Sikhs. Wake had strongly fortified a puckha house, and laid in lots of ammu-

nition and food. Directly we heard of this, and that they were holding out well, Mr. —— wrote to the general to send out aid to them. At first he refused, but after receiving a strong letter from Mr. ——, he consented, and sent off 200 Europeans in a steamer. The next day we heard that the steamer had stuck in the river, and that the general had sent orders to recal them. Of course, as Englishmen, we were in a great rage at this—leaving a number of poor fellows to their fate; so off —— and I started at twelve o'clock at night on Tuesday night to pitch into the old muff. When we got to Dinapore we found that he had been made to change his mind, and had consented to send another steamer off, which luckily happened just to have come in. In this started 150 Europeans and fifty Sikhs; we altogether made up a force of 400 men. As Wake is one of the greatest friends I have got, I determined to give him a hand if I could, and so volunteered with seven other fellows, five of whom are dead. Well, I was up all that Tuesday night, and at daylight on Wednesday, off we started. We reached the nearest point to Arrah, on the bank of the Ganges at about two o'clock, and were beginning to get dinner ready (so as to start with a good feed, as we could not expect to get anything on the road),

when we heard our advanced guard firing. We immediately all fell in, and went off to the place about two miles off, where we found them drawn up before a large nullah (river) about 200 yards wide, firing away at some Sepoys on the other side. The Sepoys, when they saw us coming, ran away; and then, as we had got so far, we thought we might as well go on. After a delay of two or three hours in getting boats and crossing over it was nearly seven o'clock before we got well off. From the villagers we heard that Wake was still all right and holding out, which was confirmed by the firing we heard in the direction of Arrah of big guns. It was a beautiful moonlight night, the road a very bad one (a kutcha one in the rains), and wooded country on both sides of us. We did not see a soul on the road, though we passed through several villages, until we came to within five miles of Arrah, where we saw a party of horsemen ahead of us, who galloped off before we got within shot. About eleven o'clock the moon went down; however, as we did not expect that the mutineers would face us, we still went on till we came within about a mile of the fortified house. We were passing a thick black mango grove to our right, when all of a sudden, without any warning, the whole place was lighted up by a tremendous volley poured into us at about

thirty or forty yards distance. It is impossible to say how many men fired into us — some say 500, some 1500. The next thing I remember was finding myself alone, lying in the middle of the road, with a crack on the head, and my hat gone. I suppose I must have been stunned for a minute. When I recovered there were several men lying by me, but not a living soul could I see. There were lots to hear, though, for the bullets from right to left were whistling over my head. I was just thinking where our men could be, and which way I should run, when I saw the Sepoys advancing out of the grove with their bayonets within a dozen yards of me. I fired my double barrel right and left into them and then ran towards our men, whom I could hear shouting on the left, under a tremendous fire from both parties. Everything now was in a most dreadful confusion; the men were all scattered in groups of fifties and twenties, firing in every direction, and, I fear, killing each other. At last a Captain Jones, a very fine fellow — our commander was never seen again after the first volley — got hold of a bugler and got the men together in a sort of hollow place, a half-filled pond. There we all lay down in a square. I was in the middle, with the doctor, helping him to tie up the wounds of the poor fellows

and bringing them water. The firing was all this time going on. The enemy could see us, as we were all dressed in white, while they were nearly naked, and behind trees and walls. However, the men fired about at random. At last the poor doctor was knocked over, badly wounded. It was dreadful to hear the poor wounded fellows asking for help.

"I shall never forget that night as long as I live. We held a consultation, and determined to retreat, as the enemy was at least 3000 to 4000 strong, and had besides several cannon. Directly morning dawned we formed order, and began our retreat. The whole distance, sixteen miles, we walked under a most tremendous fire; the ditches, the jungles, the houses, and, in fact, every place of cover along the road was lined with Sepoys. We kept up a fire as we went along; but what could we do? We could see no enemy, only puffs of smoke. We tried to charge but there was nobody to charge; on all sides they fired into us, and were scattered all over the country in groups of tens and twenties. Dozens of poor fellows were knocked over within a yard of me on my right and left; but, thank God, I escaped in the most wonderful way. The last five miles of the road I carried a poor wounded fellow, who begged me not to leave him, and though we had had nothing

to eat for more than twenty-four hours, and I had no sleep for two nights, I never felt so strong in my life, and I stepped out with the man as if he had been a feather, though he was as big as myself. Poor fellow! the men, most of them more or less wounded, were leaving him behind, and the cowardly Sepoys, who never came within 200 yards of us, were running up to murder him. I got the poor fellow safe over the nullah. I swam out and got a boat, put him in, and went over with a lot of others. The poor fellow thanked me with tears in his eyes. At the crossing of the nullah we lost a great many men; they threw away their muskets to pull the boats and to swim over, and were shot down like sheep.

"I never before knew the horrors of war, and what I have gone through I hope will make a lasting impression on my mind, and make me think more of God and His great goodness to me. I am sure God spared me because he knew I was not fit to die; and I pray God that He will prepare me, for we can truly say we know not what a day may bring forth. I had several extraordinary escapes, one bullet went between my legs as I was walking, and broke a man's leg in front of me; another bullet hit me on the back of the head, knocking me down but hardly

breaking the skin. Everything here is quiet as yet, but people are in a great panic. I cannot say that I am. Out of the 400 fine fellows that started for Arrah, nearly 200 were killed, and of the remainder I do not think more than fifty to sixty were not wounded; out of seven volunteers five were knocked over, four killed and one wounded. This has been the most disastrous affair that has happened out here. I hope, however, we may soon get some more troops again from Calcutta, and get back our name. I cry to think of the way we were beaten, and of the number of poor fellows who were killed. I will send this letter at once, for perhaps the dâk may be stopped, and I may not be able to send a letter in a day or two. I will write again if I can; but do not be alarmed if I do not. The crack on my head hardly broke the skin, and is nothing; the bullet hit me sideways, and the folds of cloth I had round my hat saved me.

August 1.

"I have just heard that about thirty men came in last night who got separated from us in the dark, and wandered to the river, where they got off in a native boat. The authentic return I have just seen; 150 men killed, the rest wounded, except about fifty men who escaped untouched. I suppose such

a disastrous affair was never heard of before in India — most dreadful mismanagement throughout. Of course we did not relieve poor Wake and his garrison. Poor creatures! We heard that they were still holding out up to two o'clock on the day we left. I am sure, my dearest mother, all your prayers to God for me have been answered. All through that dreadful night, the horrors of which I shall never forget, I felt sure that God would protect me, and bring me back in safety. I will write again; but don't be anxious about me. God will order all for the best, and I feel sure will take care of me, as He has done.

NOTE 8.—It is worthy of mention that, during the siege, the rebels several times called out to the garrison from the opposite house. First they tried to seduce the Sikhs, offering them 500 rupees per man to give up the Europeans. The Sikhs replied by sarcastic remarks and musket bullets. Again, about the fifth evening of the siege the villains offered, if the judge, magistrate, and collector, were given up, to let the rest of the party retreat unmolested. They also offered to allow the women and children (whom they thought were in the fort) to go free; and, finally, proposed to spare the whole

party, Europeans and Sikhs, on condition of their laying down their arms. The besieged had, however, heard of the capitulation at Cawnpore and its result, and were not disposed to accept the terms.

NOTE 9.—In the appendix to Mr. Gubbins's work upon Oude, will be found an admirable account (dictated by Major Eyre on his sick bed at Lucknow) both of the advance upon Arrah from Buxar, and of the subsequent capture of Jugdeespore.

NOTE 10.—A despatch from the general at Dinapore recalling Major Eyre's force did not *come to hand* in time to effect its object.

NOTE 11.—The *Friend of India* (Jan. 14th, 1858), in a recapitulation of the events of the previous year writes as follows:—

"Of course the regiments (i. e. the 7th, 8th, and 40th N. I.) went off (from Dinapore) with their arms, and for a few days it seemed that Behar was lost; they crossed the river, and were joined by Kooer Singh, a well-known zemindar, with some 5000 followers. Arrah was plundered, the stations all through Behar were abandoned or disorganised, and a force sent in pursuit was beaten back. Fortunately the desperate resistance of a few Europeans

and fifty Sikhs, who defended a private house for eight days, gave time to Major Eyre to come up with the Fusileers and scatter the mutineers. The men who thus saved Behar have neither been honoured nor rewarded."

The following lines were written in a palankeen during the Jugdeespore campaign. A few copies were printed by the volunteers:—

THE RELIEF OF ARRAH.

August 2, 1857.

DEDICATED TO MAJOR VINCENT EYRE.

Pent in our fortressed bungalow as yet our ground we stood
Six thousand rebel foes around, all thirsting for our blood,
Full feeble seemed our little force amid the mutineers;
Ourselves, with fifty faithful Sikhs and a few volunteers.

But gallant hearts had thought for us, though they were distant far,
And gallant men soon hasted on, to aid us from Buxar;
"Oh! shall we come too late to save?" this was the only fear
Of every British soldier there—of every volunteer.

Alas! another gallant force had tried to aid in vain,
Surprised at night, by thousands crushed, and beaten back again.
We seemed by God forsaken, yet help was drawing near
Th' Artillery—the 5th—and the Buxar Volunteers.

We heard the murderous musketry at midnight from afar,
And our hearts grew cold within us, for we knew th' unequal war,
We knew brave men had died for us, and we knew not then how near
Th' Artillery—the 5th—and each gallant volunteer.

Still Hope failed not within us, relaxed we not the fight,
Though for our deaths some new device each morning brought to light;
We scarce dared on the future think, yet our faces showed no fears,
Whilst, all unknown to us, marched on the troops and volunteers.

All day we were surrounded—bitter foes were lurking nigh,
Oft startling up the hush of night, we heard their fiendish cry;
Each chance of life seemed lessened, days lengthened into years,
While still pressed onwards to our aid the troops and volunteers.

One night our foes forsook us, at first we knew not why,
But hope soon changed to certainty, that friends and help were nigh;
We knew them soon victorious, and we gave three hearty cheers,
When spurring came to bring the news, the helmèd volunteers.

Like water to the thirsty wretch in deserts bleak and bare,
Like hope within the sailor's breast when he sees his guiding star,
Was the ray of joy that o'er us beamed, when we saw our friends appear,
Th' Artillery—the 5th—and each hardy volunteer.

And memory fond shall bring again those grateful feelings back,
While they our brave deliverers still follow Glory's track;
Yes! restored to those who love us, we will think in after years
On th' Artillery—the 5th—and the Buxar Volunteers.

I. I. H.

THE END.

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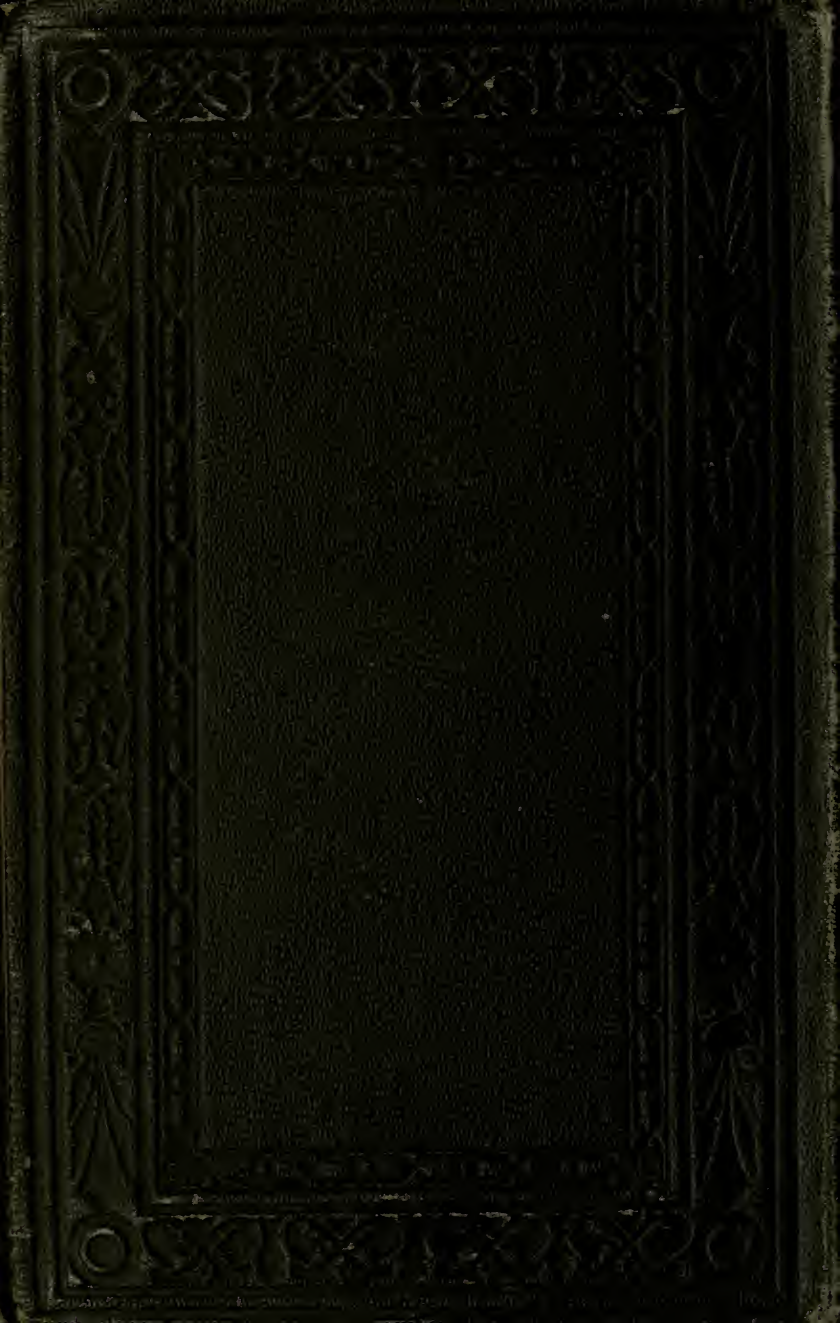
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